

REMARKS

Claims 1-35 are pending in the above-captioned patent application after this amendment. Claims 1-32 have been rejected. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of original claim 7 (rewritten as new claim 33), original claim 11 (rewritten as new claim 34), 14-25, 28 and 29. Claims 1, 26 and 30 have been amended, and claims 33-35 have been added, all for the purpose of expediting the patent application process in a manner consistent with the goals of the Patent Office pursuant to 65 Fed. Reg. 54603 (September 8, 2000), even though the Applicant believes that the previously pending claims were allowable.

Support for the amendments to the claims and for the new claims can be found throughout the originally filed application, including the originally filed claims, the drawings and the specification. More specifically, support for the amendments to claims 1, 26 and 30, and for new claims 33-35 can be found at least in Figures 3-8, in original claims 1-32, and at least in the specification at page 12, line 3 through page 14, line 33.

No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment. Consideration of the pending application is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-11, 13-21 and 23-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sawano et al. (JP 10106074 (erroneously indicated as European Patent Office No. 10106074 in the Office Action)). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims original claim 7 (re-presented herein as new claim 33), original claim 11 (re-presented herein as new claim 34), 14-21, 23-25, 28 and 29, on the grounds that the cited reference does not teach or suggest the features of the rejected claims, and therefore does not support a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as set forth below. Additionally, as provided above, the Applicant has amended claims 1, 26 and 30.

Sawano et al. is directed toward a non-rotational tape guide. (Abstract). The non-rotational tape guide includes a roughened surface that is set to a specified level by including one or more recesses having a specified shape. (Abstract). The "specified shape" of the recesses is a length of 30-70 microns (approximately 0.0012 - 0.0028 in.), a

width of 3-5 microns (approximately 0.00012 – 0.0002 in.), and a depth of 1 – 100 microns (approximately 0.00004 – 0.004 in.). (Abstract). Moreover, Sawano et al. does not teach or suggest that the depth of any one specific recess varies along its length.

In contrast to Sawano et al., claim 33 (original claim 7) is directed toward a guide assembly that requires “a first roller including a perimeter surface, a circumference, a longitudinal axis and a plurality of spaced apart grooves disposed into the perimeter surface, each of the grooves having a groove length that is less than the circumference and at least one of the grooves having a groove length of between approximately 0.01 inches and 1.5 inches.” These features are not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, a rejection of claim 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is unsupported and should be withdrawn.

Claim 34 (original claim 11) requires “a first roller including a perimeter surface, a circumference, a longitudinal axis and a groove disposed into the perimeter surface, the groove having a groove length that is less than the circumference, and a groove depth that varies between approximately zero inches and 0.02 inches along the length of the groove.” These features are not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, a rejection of claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is unsupported and should be withdrawn.

Somewhat similarly, original claim 14 requires “a first roller including a perimeter surface, a circumference, a longitudinal axis and a groove disposed into the perimeter surface, the groove having a groove depth that varies along the length of the groove.” These features are not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, a rejection of claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is unsupported and should be withdrawn. Because claims 15-24 depend directly or indirectly from claim 14, a rejection of these claims based on Sawano et al. is also unsupported, and should be withdrawn.

Original claim 25 requires “a first roller having a perimeter surface, a circumference and a plurality of spaced-apart discontinuous grooves disposed into the perimeter surface, each groove being positioned substantially parallel to the circumference of the roller, each groove having (i) a groove depth that varies between approximately zero inches and 0.02 inches, (ii) a groove length of between approximately 0.1 inches and 0.3 inches, and (iii) a groove width of between

approximately 0.005 inches and 0.015 inches.” These features are not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, a rejection of claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is unsupported and should be withdrawn.

Original claim 28 is directed toward a method that requires the steps of “providing a roller portion having a circumference and a perimeter surface, and forming a groove into the perimeter surface so that the groove has a groove depth that varies along the length of the groove.” As provided above, these steps are not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, a rejection of claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is unsupported and should be withdrawn. Because claim 29 depends from claim 28, a rejection of this claim based on Sawano et al. is also unsupported, and should be withdrawn.

Amended claim 1 is directed toward a guide assembly that requires “a rotatable first roller including a perimeter surface, a circumference, a longitudinal axis and a groove disposed into the perimeter surface, the groove having a groove length that is less than the circumference.” These features are not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, amended claim 1 is believed to be allowable.

Amended claim 26 is directed toward a method of manufacturing a tape roller that includes the steps of “providing a rotatable roller having a circumference and a perimeter surface; and forming a groove into the perimeter surface so that the groove has a groove length that is less than the circumference.” These steps are not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, amended claim 26 is believed to be allowable.

Amended claim 30 is directed toward a method that requires the step of “providing a tape drive having a guide assembly that includes a rotatable first roller having a perimeter surface, a circumference, and a groove disposed into the perimeter surface, the groove having a groove length that is less than the circumference.” This step is not taught or suggested by Sawano et al. Therefore, amended claim 30 is believed to be allowable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 12, 22 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable

over Sawano et al. As provided above, the Applicant has amended claim 1, which is believed to be allowable. Thus, because claim 12 depends from amended claim 1, claim 12 is also believed to be allowable. Further, the Applicant has amended claim 30, which is believed to be allowable. Because claim 32 depends from amended claim 30, claim 32 is also believed to be allowable. In addition, the Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 22 on the grounds that the cited reference does not teach or suggest the features of claim 22. As provided above, the Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 14 is unsupported by Sawano et al. Because claim 22 depends from claim 14, the rejection of claim 22 is also believed to be unsupported by Sawano et al. Therefore, the rejection of claim 22 should be withdrawn.

New Claims

Claims 33-35 have been added by this amendment. As provided above, claims 33 and 34 have been added for the purpose of traversing original claims 7 and 11. Claim 35 is of a slightly different scope than the previously pending claims. However, in view of the cited references, claim 35 is believed to be allowable. As provided above, amended claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Because claim 35 depends from claim 1, it is also believed to be allowable.

In addition, Sawano et al. is directed toward a non-rotational tape guide that includes recesses having an area ratio of not greater than 30%. New claim 35 requires that the percentage of the perimeter surface onto which grooves are disposed is greater than 30 percent. Thus, this feature is not taught or suggested by Sawano, and claim 35 should be allowed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-35 are allowable for the reasons set forth above, and that the application is now in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early notice of allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at 858-487-4077 for any reason that would advance the instant application to issue.

Dated this the 7th day of October, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



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